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Jane Lugea. 2016. *World Building in Spanish and English Spoken Narratives*. London: Bloomsbury. 221 pp. ISBN: 9781474282482.

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Much work has been done in recent years on the applications of Text-World Theory (henceforth TWT; see Werth [1999] or Gavins [2007], among others) to the stylistic study of literary texts (Stockwell 2002, 135-149; Hidalgo-Downing 2000).¹ However, little research has been done on the application of this framework to other discourse genres, such as political discourse—see Chilton (2004), Filardo-Llamas (2015)—and I have found no studies on how it could be used to describe natural speech. The objective of this book is to fill that gap by presenting a thorough investigation of the uses of TWT in understanding how mental representations are evoked and construed in spoken narratives.

Not only does this book try to prove the validity of TWT to new research areas, but it is also the first attempt at using this framework for texts other than the Anglophone ones to which it has always been applied. As explained in the “Introduction,” the book aims at examining the different ways in which Spanish and English speakers differ when they construct a narrative text-world. This is done by focusing on two main linguistic strategies: deixis and modality, whose importance arguably relies on their mediating role between the text-world evoked by the narrative and their contextual construction as discourse-worlds.

In chapter one, we are presented with an introductory overview of the key concepts upon which this research is based, and which are further developed in subsequent chapters. Specifically, the notions of modality and deixis, as the key analytic tools, are explained and combined with ideas related to the conceptualization of space, time and subjectivity. These concepts are used as a way of eliciting the four research questions and hypotheses which the author attempts to test, and which are also related to the content of each of the chapters in the book. Chapters two to five are of a theoretical nature, while the more applied section of the book can be found in chapters six and seven.

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As shown in previous studies (Dancygier and Sweetser 2012; Hart 2014), deixis and modality are key linguistic concepts to understanding how point of view, perspective and subjectivity are discursively constructed. Although both notions are explained in chapter two—“Deixis and Modality”—Lugea offers a particularly good description of the different theoretical approaches to the study of deixis, which focus mainly on space, time and person because of their importance in the cognitive process of building a text and discourse world. This account is not only comprehensive, but also critical, and it manages to propose novel ideas such as the understanding of deixis as a sociocentric phenomenon. Modality is related to the expression of subjectivity, particularly with how this, sometimes combined with deixis, can help the speaker take a stance on given propositions. Unfortunately, in this theoretical description, references to Paul Chilton’s explanation of discourse as a deictic space are somehow missing (2004; 2005). Although he is not frequently quoted in stylistics studies, his ideas on how subjectivity is discursively constructed would have been an interesting addition to Lugea’s description of deixis and modality.

Both deixis and modality are also key concepts in TWT, as explained in chapters four and five. In chapter four—“Text-World Theory”—an overview of the key concepts in TWT is given, particularly the distinction between discourse-world and text-world, and the significance of deixis in the process of world-building. Chapter five, “Departures from the Text-World,” is of particular interest as it talks about how TWT helps in identifying the different layers of meaning that can be generated by a text. It is in this chapter that Lugea suggests some modifications to Paul Werth’s original approach (1999) and Joanna Gavin’s revised version (2007). Amongst them should be highlighted her incorporation of William Bull’s tense system as a way of explaining how time is conceptualized in different languages (1960), which helps in broadening the scope of the application of the originally anglophone TWT. The notion of “enactor world,” which is used to explain the discursive production of characters is of key significance in order to explain narrative processes such as dialogue and reported thought. Although originally aimed at describing stylistic processes in fiction, this concept offers a very interesting tool for understanding the layered nature of meaning. However, its validity in other types of texts still remains to be tested. The final modification is the author’s adopting of Visual Understanding Environment (VUE) software, which she argues could help improve the two-dimensional nature of the diagrammatic representation of text-worlds. As Lugea is one of the few text-world scholars who uses VUE, the successful application and wide acceptance of this software by other text-world researches remains to be seen.

In chapter three—“The Frog Story Corpus”—we find an explanation of the process Lugea followed to compile her corpus of spoken narratives in both British and American English, as well as in Peninsular and Mexican Spanish. Initially she selected two corpora from the Child Language Data Exchange System webpage (CHILDES 2015) and then two further corpora were compiled from her own recording of speakers’

narratives. The four corpora analysed are based on the “frog stories,” which is a popular method of eliciting narratives for linguistic research. The results of the analysis are found in chapters six and seven, with the former being devoted to the “Analysis of Temporal World Building” and the latter to the “Analysis of Spatial, Personal and Modal World Building.” Lugea performs both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis, thus solving one of the main criticisms one could make of TWT: that it is being solely applied qualitatively to specific texts. Among the various aspects which are covered in the analysis, the study of the tense system and its relation to world building are of particular significance, as can be seen in chapter four. Given the variations that exist between English and Spanish in the grammatical construction of tense, new paths for research are opened with this contrastive analysis. Likewise, differences are observed in how epistemic modality is grammatically realized in both languages, with Spanish relying more heavily on inflections.

The findings of the volume are interesting, not only because of what they prove in relation to the differences and similarities in world-building and stance-taking in English and Spanish, and between their dialectal varieties, but also because they open up new paths of research. As mentioned above, these include the need for further contrastive studies of the different uses of tense, or the preference for world-building or function-advancing propositions of different languages. These are important, particularly as they could have implications for translation studies. Likewise, Lugea’s revision of TWT and adaptation to the study of Spanish opens the way for further adaptations of this originally Anglo-centric theory.

All in all, Lugea’s volume is a thorough and interesting study which could be of interest to a wide readership, including people working on stylistics, discourse analysis, contrastive linguistics, cognitive linguistics or translation studies. It includes a clear hypothesis which is presented at the beginning of the book with a number of research questions that are to be answered. Each chapter finishes with a summary section in which the most relevant aspects covered are reviewed. The book is not only theoretically sound but it also includes a comprehensive analysis. It is definitely a very interesting read for those interested in the link between speakers’ rhetorical and cognitive styles.

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